

NAGOYA OMIYAGE WEEKENDER

SMALL GROUP TOUR-MAXIMUM 20 PARTICIPANTS



August 30th -September 4th, 2018

4nights/6days \$1895 double/triple
\$1995 single

Shop, Sightsee, Eat, Fun- A perfect
way to spend the
Labor Day holiday weekend!

Welcome to Nagoya, with over two million inhabitants and Japan's fourth most populated city. This manufacturing powerhouse, the birthplace of Toyota and pachinko is considered the middle child, having grown accustomed to life in the shadow of its bigger brothers, Tokyo and Kansai.

Come, join us as we discover Nagoya and its cosmopolitan aspects which include some fantastic museums, significant temples, and excellent shopping. While the city struggles to shake off its reputation as a boring metropolis, Nagoyans take pride in the unpretentious nature of their friendly city.

We have also included a day trip to Gifu, located on the old Nakasendo Highway. The Nakasendo Highway was one of the Gokaido (the five main roads leading to and from Tokyo during the Edo Period).

A second day trip to Ise, home to Ise Grand Shrine, the most sacred Shinto shrine in Japan and Mikimoto Pearl Island, where Kokichi Mikimoto successfully cultivated pearls for the first time in the world in 1893. Japan's pearl industry started its development from this island. Enjoy a performance by female pearl divers, known as ama (sea women), who have traditionally been planting and harvesting the oysters.

Omiyage shopping? We didn't forget. There's Oasis 21, close by to our hotel and offering a variety of shops and dining. The Marunaka Center Market, with approximately 50 stalls, a small scale Tsukiji. There's also Osu Shopping Street with over 1,200 shops! In Gifu time at Kawaramachi Street and in Ise, the diverse shops at Okage-yokocho Street.

Itinerary/Details

Day 1 – August 30th, 2018 Thursday – Depart from Honolulu

Delta Airlines #611 Departs Honolulu 4:08 pm – Arrive Nagoya 7:50 pm + 1

Please meet up with your Panda Travel escort at the Delta Airlines area in the Main Terminal.

Day 2 – August 31st, 2018 Friday – Nagoya

After clearing customs, we will be met by our local guide and board the charter bus to our host hotel, The Best Western Hotel Nagoya, ideally located, less than a 10-minute walk to the Sakae metro station where you can find a variety of shops and dining. The drive time from the airport is approximately one hour.

Accommodations: Best Western Hotel Nagoya  **Free**

Day 3 – September 1st, 2018 Saturday – Nagoya (B)

After breakfast, please meet your guide by 8:30am in the lobby as we are off on a full day of touring.

The morning begins with a visit to Marunaka Center Market, a fresh food market in Nagoya, miniature Tsukiji. Enjoy free time here to explore. There are approximately 50 stalls offering fresh fish, meats, vegetables, kitchen supplies and other items.

What is sold is interesting & impressive, ranging from small silver fish to sea bream, yellowtail, eels, lobsters, and many kinds of clams along with abalone, brought in from the nearby fishing port of Chita Peninsula.

Around the market there are a variety of shops offering cookware, knives, and the Japanese sake shop, Okadaya.

From here we are off to Nagoya Castle, built in the beginning of the Edo Period as the seat of one of the three branches of the ruling Tokugawa family. As such, it was one of the largest castles in the country, and the castle town around it ultimately grew to become Japan's fourth largest city.

Most castle buildings were destroyed in the air raids of 1945, including the castle keep and the palace buildings. The current ferro-concrete reconstruction of the castle keep dates from 1959 and contains a modern museum with exhibits about the castle's history. The park surrounding the castle keep features two circles of moats and impressive walls with corner turrets.

In 2009, works began on the ambitious project to rebuild the castle's palace (Honmaru Goten) using traditional construction materials and techniques. Several parts of the reconstructed palace, including the entrance and reception halls with beautiful replicated paintings on the sliding doors (fusuma) were completed and are open to the public. The remainder of the palace is scheduled to be completed by spring of next year.

Next, we are off to Osu Kannon Temple and Osu Shopping District. Osu Kannon, a popular Buddhist temple originally built during the Kamakura Period (1192-1333) in neighboring Gifu Prefecture. The temple was moved to its current site in 1612 after the original temple had been repeatedly damaged by severe flooding. The current buildings are 20th century reconstructions.

Nearby, the Osu shopping District, a huge and popular shopping area containing over 1,200 shops and restaurants. This mall is always crowded and full of energy. Here you will find a variety of shops which including electrical appliances, secondhand clothing stores, restaurants, and cafes. Enjoy free time here to explore, shop and have lunch on your own.

This afternoon, a visit to the Toyota Commemorative Museum of Industry, an interesting museum that occupies the site of Toyota's original weaving plant. Established by the 13 Toyota Group companies, the museum introduces the industrial and technological revolutions through real machines and moving exhibits.

Parts of the original redbrick buildings dating from the Taisho Era (around the 1910s) have been preserved as an important industrial heritage and integrated into the museum.

From here we make our way back to our hotel and the remainder of the afternoon and evening is free.

Accommodations: Best Western Hotel Nagoya  **Free**

Day 4 – September 2nd, 2018 Sunday – Nagoya-Gifu-Nagoya (B)

After breakfast, please meet your guide by 8:30am as we are off on a full day of touring.

The morning begins with a drive to Gifu, which played an important role in Japan's history because of its location in the middle of the country. This city of approximately 400,000 has been rebuilt twice: after a devastating earthquake in 1891 and again after World War II. with its historic buildings carefully restored. Gifu's traditional pursuits of cormorant fishing and paper products are still alive today. The drive time will be just under one hour.

Once here we will be visiting the Seki Traditional Swordsmith Museum, located in the small town of Seki, known for the manufacture of cutlery and knives. It is a real gem for those interested in the history, skill, and art of sword-making.

The museum displays work dating back 700 years and exhibits include the katana (General sword), the Taichi Swords (straight and long blades), and a multitude of daggers. There is an historical overview which explains the origins and developments of Japanese blades, and there is the chance to pick up a Katana, albeit, it is chained down.

The museum is an awesome place where one can appreciate the great beauty of Japanese sword! Seeing the wave pattern on the blade of the swords created by layers of steel being folded together is truly beautiful, together with the skill that goes in to the hilt is simply amazing.

The beauty and craftsmanship of the katanas was apparent by their light weight and intricate designs. There were long hiragana (Japanese phonetic alphabet) passages on some swords. Those passages were so small that it was necessary to use a spyglass. It was a testament to the value which was placed on the soul of the samurai. One cannot fail to be humbled by these cultural symbols seen up close and personal.

The museum also hosts a fine collection of blades in the modern exhibition hall. There is a vast array of designs. Some have quirky color groups inspired by Japan's Kawaii (cute) culture and manga and anime. And it does not stop there. The items exhibited inside the museum are accompanied by the process of sword making outside of the main building.

From here we are off to Gifu's Kawara-machi ("Riverside Town"), a small preserved historical neighborhood that maintains an old-fashioned appearance with its lattice-walled houses. This area prospered as a river port for merchants to travel during the Nobunaga regime.

Enjoy free time here to walk around and feel the atmosphere of the good old days among the old merchant houses, traditional red round post boxes and the tall black walls that surround the back street of the village.

Today, these buildings house restaurants, confectionary, and sundries stores. Lunch is on your own and we suggest the local grilled Ayu (sweet fish) and Japanese sweets with a motif of an Ayu. A variety of traditional souvenirs are also available in the shops.

This afternoon enjoy riding on the Mt. Kinka Ropeway. In just three minutes the ropeway takes you from Gifu Park to the top of Mt. Kinka. Along the ride, enjoy the dynamic primeval forests covering the mountain as well as the beautiful stream of the Nagara River and the cityscape of Gifu.

Once at the mountain top, there is a shop and viewing restaurant, as well as the Squirrel Village where you can play with the animals.

From here we make our way back to Nagoya and once back at our hotel, the remainder of the afternoon and evening is free.

Accommodations: Best Western Hotel Nagoya  **Free**

Day 5 – September 3rd, 2018 Monday – Nagoya-Ise-Iga-Nagoya (B)

After breakfast, please meet your guide in the lobby by 8:30am as we are off on a day tour to Ise and Mikimoto Pearl Island. The drive time is just under two hours.

Once here we will be visiting Ise Jingu Shrine and Okage Yokocho Shopping Street.

Since the Edo Period, it has been said that one should visit Ise Jingu at least once in a lifetime. The shrine is dedicated to Amaterasu-Omikami, the overall ujigami for all Japanese people (an ujigami is a deity that people living in the same area all worship).

The official name of the shrine with a history spanning 2000 years, is Jingu. There are two other large shrines, Kotajingu (Naiku) and Toyouke Daijingu (Geku), at the center of the Jingu surrounded by an additional 14 associated shrines, 43 auxiliary shrines, 24 subordinate shrines, and 42 other shrines.

After all that walking, you must be hungry, so next, a stroll around Okage Yokocho, a charming tourist town located in front of Naiku that has recreated the townscape from the Edo and Meiji periods. Here you will find many souvenir shops and restaurants. Enjoy free time here to shop and have lunch on your own.

A variety of local dishes are available to try, such as the Ise specialty, Ise udon noodles, and beef dishes. Not too hungry, there are also snacks and sweets you can nibble on as you walk around the town.

Don't forget to make a stop at Akafuku Honten, an old teahouse for pilgrims visiting Ise that became famous for akafuku mochi, the local specialty. The shop front, an old facade of blackened wood, topped by a sign with two characters written in golden letters: aka (red) and fuku (happiness) is easy to spot. A stop here leaves you with the feeling of having slipped back in time to the Edo Period.

We are now off to Mikimoto Pearl Island, a small island located in Ise Bay. This is the island where Kokichi Mikimoto successfully cultivated pearls for the first time in the world in 1893. Japan's pearl industry started its development from this island.

Since 1951 when it was opened to the public, the island has become one of the major sightseeing spots in the Chubu region. This green island floating in Toba Bay has a Pearl Museum showing the history of pearls from ancient times and spectacular works of art.

This afternoon we will be enjoying a demonstration of ama (women divers). This is a rare opportunity even in Japan to meet ama in traditional white diving gear.

The Ama divers played an essential role in the development of the cultured pearl industry. They collected the oysters for implanting and returned them to the ocean afterward. During the demonstration make sure to listen for the distinctive whistle Ama divers use to control their breathing. Once you hear it, you'll never forget it!

From here, we now make our way back to Nagoya, arriving at approximately 6:00pm. The remainder of the evening is free.

Accommodations: Best Western Hotel Nagoya  **Free**

Day 6 – September 4th, 2018 Tuesday – Nagoya (B)

It's our last day here on tour! After breakfast, enjoy free time for shopping or sightseeing on your own until we meet later this afternoon for the transfer to the airport.

We have arranged for a late check-out from our rooms. Please meet your guide in the lobby with your bags by 5:30pm.

Delta Airlines #612 Departs Nagoya 9:35 pm – Arrive Honolulu 10:26 am